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AUTHOR Russell, James R.; Stafford, Carl W.
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the teaching skills workshops at Purdue University (Indiana), which were originally developed in 1980 to train graduate assistants to teach college classes but are now being used by the faculty--instructors through full professors--to improve their teaching. It is noted that the workshops have been successfully modified for use with different audiences and under varying time constraints. This description provides brief descriptions of the 10 90-minute sessions that are offered: (1) Student-Teacher Relationships; (2) University Policies and Procedures Related to Teaching; (3) Designing Instruction; (4) Lecturing Techniques; (5) Audio-Visual Techniques; (6) Micro-Teaching Exercise; (7) Discussion Techniques; (8) Developing Tests; (9) Scoring Tests and Assigning Grades; and (10) Evaluation Instruction. Four primary techniques for advertising the workshops are described, i.e., the CIS Newsletter, the university channel on the local cable television system, direct mail, and word of mouth. Procedures and materials used in conducting the workshops are discussed, and five methods used to evaluate the workshops are listed: verbal comments by participants, session evaluation forms, course and instruction evaluation (Likert-type items with statements about the instructors, materials, media, and content), small group instructional diagnosis, and an open-ended rating scale. Also described are follow-up activities, formal reviews of the workshops, and modification of individual workshops to meet specific needs and requests. Copies of the continuity sheet for workshop facilitators, the session evaluation form, and the small group instructional diagnosis form are appended. (6 references) (BBM)

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Helping Faculty Develop Teaching Skills Through Workshops

Authors:

James R. Russell
Carl W. Stafford

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I. Introduction

The teaching skills workshops were originally developed in 1980 to train graduate assistants to teach college classes. Since then they have evolved into workshops that are being used by the faculty — instructors through full professors — to improve their teaching. The workshops have been successfully modified for use with different audiences and under varying time constraints. To date, over 800 faculty members have completed our workshops. As a consequence of these workshops, CIS is involved every semester in helping faculty to improve their classes.

II. Description of the Workshops

The workshops are a series of 10 90-minute sessions which are open to all faculty, graduate instructors, and staff. The individual sessions are:

1. **Student-Teacher Relationships** — This workshop describes the most common student complaints about instructors and suggests ways that instructors can improve their relationships with students. Student services at Purdue are discussed and directions for referring students with personal or academic problems are included.

2. **University Policies and Procedures Related to Teaching** — Purdue policies and regulations concerning instruction are discussed as outlined in the **Academic Procedures Manual**, the **Faculty and Staff Handbook**, and **University Regulations: A Reference Book for Students, Staff, and Faculty**. The procedures for appealing grades at Purdue are also discussed.

3. **Designing Instruction** — The importance of having consistent learning objectives, instructional activities, and evaluation procedures is discussed. Practice is provided in developing objectives and evaluating them using a checklist. Various types of instructional activities are presented. Exercises provide practice in matching objectives, instructional activities, and evaluation.

4. **Lecturing Techniques** — This workshop considers the strengths and limitations of lecturing as a teaching method. Ways to structure a lecture and utilize basic public speaking techniques are discussed. Techniques and checklists for evaluating lectures are provided.

5. **Audio-Visual Techniques** — This workshop provides a brief overview of procedures for scheduling rooms and audio-visual equipment . Recommendations for using the most common types audio-visual equipment — audio and public address systems, chalkboards, charts and graphics, computer-displayed materials,film, objects, overhead transparencies, slides, and videotapes — are given.

6. **Micro-Teaching Exercise** — The workshop provides each participant with the opportunity to prepare and present a five-minute segment of classroom instruction. The presentation will be videotaped and played back for the presenter and a small group of peers. During the playback, an evaluation form will be completed by all participants. Following this, strengths of the presentation and suggestions for improvement will be discussed.

7. **Discussion Techniques** — The workshop presents the advantages and disadvantages of group discussion as a method of teaching. It provides an organizational framework for effective discussions and suggestions for conducting discussions. It also outlines the responsibilities of discussion leaders and participants. conducting discussions. It also outlines the responsibilities of discussion leaders and participants.

8. **Developing Tests** — The purposes of and procedures for writing college tests are explained. The strengths and weaknesses of true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and essay tests are presented. Specific suggestions for writing each type of test item are discussed. Good and bad examples of test items are included.

9. **Scoring Tests and Assigning Grades** — Norm-referenced and criterion-referenced grading systems are compared and contrasted. The Center for Instructional Services' test scoring and analysis service is explained and its use for test improvement described. Several methods of assigning course grades are discussed. A variety of factors to be considered in assigning grades is presented, and the distinction between grading and evaluation is explained.

10. **Evaluation Instruction** — This workshop discusses techniques for assessing the effectiveness of instructional materials, the instructional environment, and the instructor. Techniques for peer, self, and informal student evaluation are explained. Two formal methods of student evaluation — Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (**SGID**) and the Purdue Instructor and Course Appraisal System (**CAFETERIA**) — are described.

These workshops are presented as a series during the fallsemester, before the spring semester, during the spring semester, before the summer session, and during the summer session. During the regular sessions (fall, spring, and summer), the sessions are presented twice a week during a five-week period. Before the spring and summer sessions, the workshops are presented in an intensive three-day format.

Each workshop is structured around a printed study guide distributed to the participants before the workshop. The workshops are designed to be highly interactive and to demonstrate ideas and techniques presented in the study guide. The optimum number of participants is 15. With less than 12 participants, the group does not provide enough interactivity. With more than 18, each member of the group does not get a chance to participate during each session. In order to keep the workshops moving and to provide a change of pace, two facilitators from the CIS staff are present at each workshop.

Assignments are used to provide a common experience base for participants and to generate materials which can be discussed during the workshops. There are three of these assignments: 1) participants are asked to submit questions about college teaching that they want answered, 2) to visit a class of another instructor, and 3) write objectives, instructional activities, and test items.

III. Advertising the Workshops

Four primary techniques are used to promote the workshops.

1. CIS Newsletter — This newsletter is distributed to all faculty and staff five times each year. It includes workshop dates in each issue and discusses the workshops once every fall in a special issue that provides an overview of CIS services.

2. University channel on the local TV cable system — Dates of workshops are listed in the coming events section. In addition, periodic descriptions of the workshops given in the news portion of the programming.

3. Direct mail — Announcements are sent to faculty and staff about every six months, depending upon length of the waiting list. These announcements are responsible for recruiting most of the workshop attendees.

4. Word of Mouth — This method has provided the best promotion possible, but it is very difficult to measure. Interested individuals frequently call and ask about the workshops. When asking about the workshops, they often tell us that colleagueshave told them about how helpful the workshops had been.

IV. Conducting the Workshops

Each workshop is structured around a printed study guide containing a set of objectives. The participants are expected to have read the study guides before the workshops. In order to ensure that all points are covered, a "continuity sheet" is prepared for use by the facilitators during each workshop (See **Figure 1**). These sheets are not rigid schedules, but rather flexible guidelines which allow the facilitators to respond to questions from participants and to spontaneous teaching opportunities. These sheets also provide a list of the items that are needed during the workshop. This has helped us to make sure that we have all the materials that we will need for a particular workshop.

The participants are encouraged to ask questions and to share teaching experiences with other participants. The workshops are designed to encourage interaction and dialogue among all participants and all facilitators. This dialogue has been very helpful in allowing the participants to share their experiences -- both good and bad — what worked and what did not. This helps to foster a climate of collegial sharing of experiences rather than lecturing by the master. It is during these dialogues that we begin to develop a relationship that later allows us to provide consulting services to some of the participants.

The workshop assignments involve participants in meaningful instructional activities. Participants write objectives, design instructional activities, construct test items, and share techniques for improving student-teacher interactions. The participants also observe another instructor in a teaching situation in the microteaching exercise. In this highly rated assignment, each participant prepares and presents a five-minute excerpt from a lesson to be videotaped. The videotape and the live presentation are critiqued (orally and in written form) by the other participants and the facilitators.

V. Evaluation of the Workshops

Five methods are used to evaluate the workshops.

1. Verbal comments by the participants — These informal comments, made during and after each workshop, provide valuable input for reviewing the individual sessions.

2. Session evaluation forms — These evaluation forms are completed by each participant at the end of each session, these forms (See **Figure 2**) ask for an overall reaction to the session as w as specific responses as to likes and dislikes about the session and suggestions for improvement. These forms have provided some of our best feedback.

3. Course and Instruction Evaluation — This form uses Likert-type items with statements about the instructors, the materials, the media, and the content. It serves two purposes: to improve the workshops and to demonstrate how this type of evaluation can be used in courses.

4. Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (**SGID**) — This session is conducted by a facilitator not involved with the workshop. The participants are broken into small groups and evaluate the overall workshop. The facilitator provides specific feedback to the workshop staff (See **Figure 3**).

5. Open-ended rating scale — The participants are required to pick which session they liked the best and which the least. They are then asked to tell us why they made their particular choices.

Evaluation is an on-going process with the first two methods used during and following each session, and the latter three techniques implemented near the end of the series of workshops. It should also be emphasized that as with any technique we use, we used this one to teach as well as to evaluate. Thus, we have the participants experience as well as use an evaluation technique in the expectation that they will want to use them later in their own teaching.

VI. Follow-up of the Workshops

As a result of the rapport established between the facilitators and the instructors, the participants often call upon the college teaching workshop staff for consultation following the workshops. The consulting may result in an answer to a simple question or a referral for a service. The facilitators often provide referrals to other individuals or services on campus. In other cases, the participants may need a major review and revision of their courses. The facilitators have provided instructional design assistance as requested.

The facilitators are available to visit individual classes of former CTW participants. Following the class, the facilitator sits down with the instructor to review strengths and weaknesses and to provide suggestions for improvement. The facilitators also review videotapes of former participants' classes at their request. Again, the facilitators review their findings with the instructors.

Workshop participants sometimes also request SGID's of their classes. One of the workshop facilitators conducts these SGID's, discusses the results with the instructor, and may suggest how the instructor can improve any problem areas uncovered by the SGID.

VII. Review of the Workshops

The series of workshops is reviewed by the staff three times each time they are offered. First, the staff reviews any weaknesses and suggests revisions the week before the workshops start. At this session, staff assignments are made for all 10 workshops.

Secondly, the staff meets once each week during the regular workshops to review the previous week's sessions and to plan any changes in the coming week's sessions.

Finally, after the workshops are completed, the staff reviews all the participant evaluations. The staff discusses any changes which might be made to improve individual sessions or the series as a whole. Generally, we try to work on the workshop that received the lowest rating. This way, we are constantly improving the workshops.

VIII. Modification of the Workshops

The individual workshops have been modified by the staff to meet specific needs and requests. If a participant raises a specific question related to the content of a particular session, the staff can modify that session to address that question.

The length of sessions can be increased or decreased to meet specific needs. They can be shortened to 50 minutes to fit the standard class period at Purdue. Generally we have found that the 90 minute length provides the best length time to allow all the participants to participate but keep the workshops moving along a an interesting pace. However, we will shorten them to fit the needs of a particular situation. Most often, we delete elements from a workshop to achieve the shorter time frame.

The staff has also reformatted and reshaped sessions for particular audiences. For example, sessions have been modified for specific departments or specific teaching strategies and to meet the needs of foreign-born teaching assistants. We have also modified the workshops for presentation to the trainers at a local corporation.

IX. Summary

The College Teaching Workshops are attended by faculty as well as graduate teaching assistants. In fact, the majority of the participants have been faculty. The workshops have resulted in a continuing stream of requests from former participants for different forms of consultation to help improve their teaching efficiency and effectiveness.

Requests continue for special workshops to help faculty and graduate teaching assistants in their teaching and professional presentations. These requests have often come from former workshop participants. Thus, the workshops have helped to generate an increasing interest in the improvement of teaching on the Purdue campus.

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Figure 1: Continuity Sheet

A-V Techniques

1. write Agenda on board an go over objectives in study guide.
2. Show first half of **Project the Right Image** (were they knock the projector down).
   a) Questions on overhead: "What did Matthew sprocket fail to do?"
   ASIDE: pages 3-4 in study guide
3. Selection and Scheduling -- refer to study guide
4. Utilizing
   a) audio and public address
   b) chalkboard
   c) overhead
   d) slides
   e) film and video (**The Learning Edge**)
   f) object - Thubspot
5. Classrooms
6. Answer questions
7. Half-sheet evaluation

__ Indian map	__ transparency set
__ template	__ extra study guides
__ damp cloth	__ next study guide (Discuss)
__ **Project the Right Image**	__ 1/2 sheet evaluations
__ colored chalk	__ microphone
__ ruler	__ **The Learning Edge**
__ felt tip markers (water soluble)	__ slide set on slides with accompanying transparencies

Figure 2: Session Evaluation Form

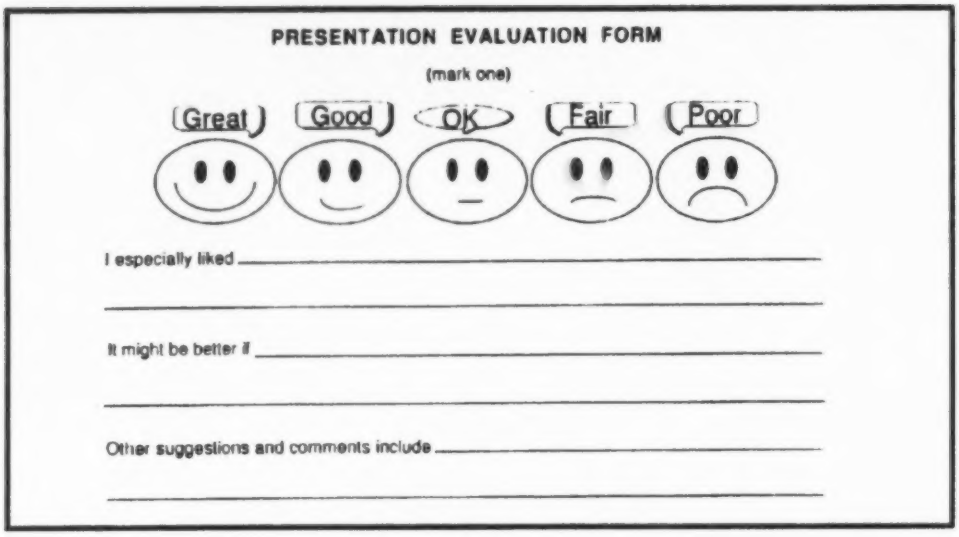
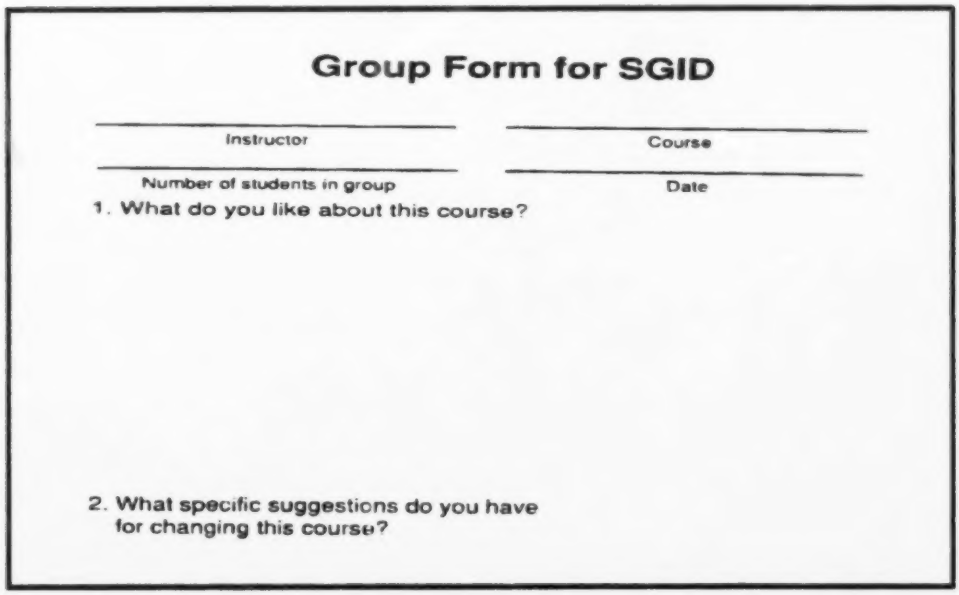


Figure 3: Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID) Form


Group Form for SGID
Instructor
Course
Number of students in group
Date
1. What do you like about this course?
2. What specific suggestions do you have for changing this course?